1321.0 - Small Business in Australia, 2001

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 16/10/2002

MEDIA RELEASE

October 16, 2002 Embargoed: 11:30 AM (AEST) 130/2002

Recent growth in small business sector

The number of Australian small businesses increased by 2.7% per annum over the three years from 1997-98 to 2000-01 according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

There were more than 1,122,000 small non-agricultural businesses operating in Australia in 2000-01. This comprised 540,000 non-employing small businesses and 582,100 employing small businesses. In total these businesses employed 3.3 million people, 47% of the private sector workforce in 2000-01.

The growth rate for employing small businesses was 2.3% during the three years to 2000-01. During the same period the number of non-employing small businesses increased by 3.1%.

Growth in small business employment over the three years to 2000-01 was 2.5%. Over the three years the number of people employed in small businesses grew at an average of 3.5% per year. There was a small increase (0.4%) in the number of people working in their own unincorporated businesses.

Across the states and territories the average annual growth rate in the number of small businesses over the 3 years to 2000-01 was highest in the Australian Capital Territory (7.5%), Northern Territory (7.1%) and Western Australia (3.7 %), while Tasmania (0.3%) recorded the lowest growth rate.

At an industry level, the industries experiencing the largest annual average increase over the last 3 years were finance and insurance (14.7%), construction (7.4%) and education (3.5%). Personal and other services and the manufacturing industry both recorded a decline in numbers recording -1.2% and -0.6% respectively.

Full details, plus information on non-employing businesses, industry performance and profiles of selected industries are in **Small Business in Australia, 2001** (cat. no. 1321.0).

This page last updated 8 December 2006

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